

Remarks

Claims 31, 34-55 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Blume, et al (USPN 6,372,252B1) in view of Hijeya et al., (USPN 4,562,020). Claims 31, 34-55 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Blume, et al (USPN 6,372,252B1) in view of Akiyama, et al. (USPN 5,576,025). Applicants respectfully traverse each of these rejections.

Applicants submit that Blume, which was published as a patent on April 16, 2002, is not prior art to the present application. The priority date for the present application is September 14, 1999. Applicants respectfully submit that the withdrawal of the all of rejections, which are all based on Blume, is warranted.

Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance and reconsideration is requested.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments concerning the above, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the number listed below.

Please credit any overpayment or charge any additional fees to Deposit Account No.:
23-0458.

Respectfully submitted,



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